

## Tilburg University

### Populist parties in Europe

de Ruiter, J.J.

*Published in:*  
Today's Zaman

*Publication date:*  
2013

[Link to publication in Tilburg University Research Portal](#)

*Citation for published version (APA):*  
de Ruiter, J. J. (2013). Populist parties in Europe. *Today's Zaman*, 1.

#### General rights

Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the public portal are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

- Users may download and print one copy of any publication from the public portal for the purpose of private study or research.
- You may not further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain
- You may freely distribute the URL identifying the publication in the public portal

#### Take down policy

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

## Populist parties in Europe: The Dutch Party for Freedom and the French Front National join forces

Front National (FN) leader Marine le Pen's visit to Party For Freedom (PVV) leader Geert Wilders in The Hague will not harm the PVV. Instead, it will be a win-win situation for both the PVV and the FN.

The visit fits neatly into the ideology of the PVV, as outlined by MP and party ideologue Martin Bosma in his book *The Fake Elite of the Counterfeiters* (2010), especially with regards to an included quote by his leader Geert Wilders: 'This is exactly why we are here. Even if we lose all but one seat in Parliament, this is our task.'

The near fatalism captured in this quotation is what drives the PVV and explains its often-bizarre antics. All means are justified to reach their one goal: a Dutch society without Islam, without the euro and without Europe. Or, as Wilders previously expressed it (also recorded by Bosma): 'You may have heard that the Group Wilders is a one-issue movement, a club with only one point on its agenda. That is correct. Our issue is freedom.' And in Wilders' eyes this freedom is primarily negative, or, as Bosma puts it: 'We will speak out against Islam, against the multicultural project and in favor of stopping immigration from Muslim countries'.

### **Influence, but no executive power**

It is precisely because of its missionary and almost fatalistic character that the Party For Freedom – which better can be called a movement – is not interested in executive power. That is only a hassle. Instead, the PVV attempts successfully to influence public opinion while remaining comfortably in the opposition.

In the polls the PVV is continually the largest or second-largest political party in the Netherlands, while [reports](#) on the increase of racism in Dutch politics are continuously ignored. However, the PVV doesn't want to be part of the government. Rather, it feeds the people quietly and less quietly with xenophobia and hatred and takes every opportunity to achieve her goal.

### **Marine le Pen's visit**

Marine le Pen's visit last 12 November provided such an opportunity. Of course, Wilders knows that there is at least a hint of anti-Semitism to her Front National, while he is an ardent supporter of Israel, and that her stance on homosexuality differs vastly from his own, equally being in favor of it. However, the FN will function well in the PVV's mission against Islam.

The rationale behind this is simple. Together with the FN and other populist parties, the PVV tries to breach the walls of the European fortress. Parties like the PVV are gaining popularity all over Europe. That provides great opportunity – do not underestimate the disruptive effect of populist parties in EU member states individually and in the European Parliament collectively.

And what about the FN's anti-Semitism and her stance on gay rights? Suppose that the PVV agenda is realized and Europe falls to pieces. Then the PVV gets her way with a new Dutch and Islam-free nation state and Wilders will have nothing to do with Marine le Pen and her FN anymore. The latter may create a new independent France in any way

they like and the PVV and its resurrected nation state will have nothing to do with them. That is also the reason why Wilders can reassure his pro-Jewish American financiers: the end, getting rid of Islam, justifies the means, collaboration with the anti-Semitic FN.

The proposed collaboration between the PVV and the Belgian Flemish Interest (VB), as recently discussed by leaders Geert Wilders and Filip de Winter, is facing similar issues. For example, the two parties differ in their stance on gay marriage and Wilders abhors the wind of WWII collaboration surrounding the VB. But here too, the end justifies the means, as is the case in the cooperation between the PVV and the FN.

The cooperation with the Front National and similar parties such as the Flemish Interest is a win-win situation for all parties involved.

### **The poison of xenophobia**

But it's not a win-win situation for the countries of Europe. Both the FN and the PVV distribute an extremely evil ideology of xenophobia. And, as our violent history teaches us, once that poison enters the bloodstream of Europe, it is difficult to get it out again.

Also, if the FN and PVV succeed in obtaining with other similar parties originating from at least seven member states of the Union at least 27 seats, they are allowed to form a fraction and as such they are given considerable administrative support and as well specific rights in the European Parliament. This will inevitably lead to more negative voices against Muslims in Europe and against Turkey and its possible membership of the Union. Mainstream political parties will undeniably be influenced by the mindset of the new populist block and harden their position towards Turkey.

The martyr mentality speaking from Wilders' claim that 'this is exactly why we are here, even if we lose all but one seat in Parliament, this is our task' makes it clear that we are dealing with ruthless and sacrificial politicians that carelessly and deliberately open one Pandora's box after the other. Marine le Pen's visit to The Hague is only the most recent and undoubtedly not the last example.

An earlier Dutch version of this article was published earlier in the Dutch newspaper [Trouw](#).